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Letter dated 1 November 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a note by the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations concerning the cooperation between Belarus and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the Commission on Human Rights (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 105.

(Signed) Andrei Dapkiunas
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 1 November 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Cooperation between Belarus and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the Commission on Human Rights

A convincing example of Belarus' active cooperation with the thematic special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights is the visit by the Commission's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which took place from 16 to 26 August 2004 at the invitation of the Government of Belarus.

During its visit to Belarus, the Working Group met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the President of the Supreme Court, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Deputy Procurator-General, the First Deputy Minister of Justice, the President of the Bar Association of Belarus, the President of the Military Court and the President of the Commission on Legislation and Judicial and Legal Issues of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly.

The Working Group visited remand units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, community public order units, district internal affairs departments, correctional institutions, agencies of the procuratorial system and courts in the cities of Minsk, Grodno, Gomel, Mazyr and Vitebsk. At the request of the Working Group, a visit was arranged to the village of Peskovtsy (Grodno oblast), where Y. Bandazhevsky is living in an open prison.

During the press conference that concluded the visit, the Chairperson of the Working Group Leïla Zerrougui (Algeria) noted the high level of cooperation between the Government of Belarus and the Working Group and the constructive approach taken to the formulation and implementation of the programme for the visit.

In particular, she commended the Government's efforts to develop appropriate legislation, characterized the situation with respect to asylum in Belarus as one of the best compared with other countries in the world and noted a range of other positive aspects relating to detention.